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ABSTRACT

This study sought to: (1) identify levels of use and expected use of alcohol and tobacco among second grade children; (2) determine if differences exist in levels of self-esteem between children who expect to use these substances and children who no not expect to do so; and (3) determine if differences exist in levels of self-esteem between children identified as a "suspected child of alcoholic parents" and children not so identified. Two hundred eighty-nine children from 11 project elementary schools were randomly selected from various second grade classes to participate in 20-minute interviews. Questions concerned self-esteem, as well as items concerning use and expected use of alcohol and tobacco. Results indicate that some children had used, and were currently using, alcohol and tobacco products and expected to continue to use these products in the future. Suspected children of alcoholics were more likely to have used alcohol and tobacco and to score lower on "parent self-esteem." (Author/DF)

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Self-esteem Relative To The Use And Expected Use of Alcohol And Tobacco And The Identification of Suspected Children of Alcoholics

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Running Head: Alcohol and Tobacco

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The purpose of the study was to: (1) to identify levels of use and expected use of alcohol and tobacco among second grade children, (2) determine if differences exist in levels of self-esteem between children who expect to use these substances and children who do not expect to do so, and (3) determine if differences exist in levels of self-esteem between children identified as a "suspected child of alcoholic parents" and children not so identified. The study was part of an evaluation of a state wide drug education program funded by the Arkansas Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention.

MEHTOD

Children (n=289) from eleven different project elementary schools participated in individual face to face interviews with a member of the project staff. Children participating in interviews were selected by a random number process, matching the number selected to the student number listed in the teachers' roll books. Average time for each interview was approximately 20 minutes. Each interview included questions concerning self-esteem, as well as items concerning use and expected use of alcohol and tobacco. The interview included questions about parental drinking only if the child mentioned this first. For example, if a child spontaneously mentioned that one or both parents used alcoholic beverages, the interview asked "how do you feel about that?" Negative responses such as "sad" or "I did'nt like it" were followed up with "If you could tell your parents anything you want about how you feel about their drinking, what

would you say?" If the child brought up the topic, expressed negative feelings about the drinking, and indicated that he/she would tell parents to quit or reduce drinking, that child was classified as a suspected child of an alcoholic.

RESULTS

The sample included 289 second grade children. Thirty-six of the children were black, 252 white and 2 "others". There was a total of 141 males and 148 females. Thirty-six children (12.46 percent) indicated they had smoked cigarettes. Only three children (1.04 percent) reported current use and 28 children (9.89 percent) reported that they expected to smoke cigarettes in the future. Fifty-five children (19.03 percent), thirty-four of them male (24.11 percent of all the males) indicated that they had used smokeless tobacco. Twelve children (4.15 percent) reported current use, including two boys reporting use "about every day". Forty-four children (15.9 percent) indicated that they expected to "dip or chew" regularly in the future. One hundred twenty-three children (42.56 percent) indicated that they had used alcohol, with 46 (15.91 percent) indicating current use and 4 boys (1.38 percent total sample) indicating use on a near daily basis. Sixty-eight children (28.36 percent) indicated that they expected to be regular drinkers. The total number of "future drinkers", including those who expected to drink only on special occasions was 111 (39.79 percent). The number of

children identified as suspected children of alcoholics was 17 (5.91 percent)

Contingency Tables

Results indicated that suspected children of alcoholics were more likely than other children to: (1) indicate that they expect to be regular "dippers or chewers", (2) have drunk alcohol, (3) have a higher frequency of current alcohol use, (4) indicate expected use of alcohol and (5) report future drinking habits indicative of heavier drinking. Results related to sex of repondent indicated that males were more likely to report: (1) having used smokeless tobacco, (2) a higher frequency of current use of smokeless tobacco and (3) expected use of smokeless tobacco.

Insert Table 1

About Here

Analysis of Variance

Results for parent self-esteem indicated:

(1) a significant difference in self-esteem scores between suspected children of alcoholics (COA) and other children with COAs exhibiting lower scores.

(2) a significant difference in self-esteem scores between children who expect to drink when they are older and those who do not expect to do so, with expected drinkers exhibiting lower scores.

(3) a significant interaction for sex and expected drinking habits, with girls who indicated they expected to "get drunk at least once a week" exhibiting much higher self-esteem scores than boys indicating this type of drinking behavior.

Results for Perceived Physical Attractiveness indicated significant interactions for sex and:

(1) having ever smoked. The highest self-esteem scores were exhibited by girls who had smoked and boys who had not smoked. By far the lowest scores were exhibited by boys who had smoked.

(2) frequency of smoking. Girls who had tried cigarettes "a few times" exhibited the highest levels of self-esteem. Boys in this use catetgory exhibited the lowest levels.

(3 expected smoking. Girls expecting tc smoke exhibited the lowest levels of self-esteem. Boys expecting to smoke exhibited the highest scores.

Results for Self-Worth indicated:

(1) a significant difference in self-esteem scores by frequency of smokeless tobacco use, with those reporting "dipping or chewing almost every day" exhibiting higher self-esteem

scores than all other categories of use.

(2) a significant difference in self-esteem scores by frequency of alcohol use with those reporting drinking "almost every day" scoring significantly higher than all use categories except "used to drink, but not now".

(3) significant interaction for sex and:

(a) smoking frequency. Boys indicating smoking "every once in awhile" exhibited a much higher self-esteem score than girls in this category.

(b) expected drinking habits. Boys who indicated they expected "to get drunk at least once a week" had the highest self-esteem scores. Girls in the same drinking category exhibited the lowest scores.

(c) expected smoking. Boys expecting to smoke when they are older exhibited the highest self-esteem scores. Girls expecting to smoke had the lowest scores.

Results for Perceived Sports Ability yielded:

(1) a significant difference by sex with males exhibiting higher scores than females.

(2) a significant difference in self-esteem scores by frequency of smokeless tobacco usage with highest levels of use exhibiting highest levels of self-esteem.

(3) a significant interaction for sex and expected use of smokeless tobacco with girls not expecting to use smokeless tobacco exhibiting low self-esteem. Boys not expecting to use smokeless tobacco had slightly higher self-esteem scores than boys and girls expecting to use the products.

Results for Peer Self-Esteem indicated a significant difference in self-esteem scores by the current frequency of use of: (1) cigarettes, (2) smokeless tobacco and (3) alcohol. In each case groups with the highest rate of use had the highest self-esteem.

Insert Table 2

About Here

SUMMARY

Results of this study indicate that even among second graders some children have used, and are currently using, alcohol and tobacco products and expect to use these products in the future. Suspected children of alcoholics are more likely to report having used alcohol, having a greater frequency of current use, greater expectations of future use, and expected drinking habits indicating heavier use than other children. Suspected children of alcoholics are also more likely to expect to use smokeless

tobacco and to score lower on "parent self-esteem". These results suggest that the children that we have identified as suspected children of alcoholics are at greater risk, as far as use of alcohol and tobacco is concerned. Special educational intervention for this group may be advisable. Results also suggest that educational programs designed to reduce the use of tobacco and alcohol should address concepts of self-esteem.

TABLE 1
Summary of Contingency Table Analysis

VARIABLE	CHI SQUARE VALUE	CRAMER'S V	DF	PROBABILITY	N
Suspected COA and					
Will be Regular Smokeless User	5.327	0.137	1	0.021	282
Have Drank Alcohol	5.658	0.142	1	0.017	286
Frequency of Alcohol Use	15.529	0.234	3	0.001	286
Will be Regular Drinker	8.573	0.174	1	0.003	283
Future Drinking Habits	22.369	0.280	4	0.001	286
Sex (Gender) and					
Have "Dipped or Chewed"	4.629	4.629	1	0.031	289
Frequency of Smokeless Use	8.477	0.172	3	0.037	288
Will be Regular Smokless User	17.146	0.246	1	0.001	284

TABLE 2
Summary of Analysis of Variance Procedure

VARIABLE	DF	ANOVA SS	F VALUE	PROBABILITY
Parents S.E. for Sex and				
Children of Alcoholic	1,281	337.407	11.73	0.001
Expect to Drink	1,281	328.530	11.34	0.001
*Expected Drinking Habits	4,279	349.398	3.09	0.016
Sports S.E. for Sex and				
"Dipping" Frequency	4,281	415.453	2.55	0.039
*Expect to "Dip"	1,280	224.465	5.50	0.020
Peer S.E. for Sex and				
Smoking Frequency	2,283	684.869	7.63	0.001
"Dipping" Frequency	4,281	1,353.672	7.80	0.001
Drinking Frequency	4,280	990.738	5.55	0.001
Physical Attractiveness S.E. for Sex and				
*Ever Smoked	1,284	268.275	5.12	0.025
*Smoking Frequency	2,283	346.548	3.29	0.039
*Expect to Smoke	1,279	246.446	4.73	0.031
Self Worth S.E. for Sex and				
"Dipping" Frequency	4,281	266.116	5.90	0.001
Drinking Frequency	4,280	134.818	2.86	0.024
*Smoking Frequency	2,283	71.824	3.18	0.043
*Expected Drinking Habits	1,279	137.316	2.94	0.021
*Expect to Smoke	1,279	103.550	8.88	0.003

*Represents significant interaction effects with sex. See text for further explanation.